

ANIMALS IN THE SERVICE POLICY

Policy Statement:

Animals can help children from a very young age to learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They offer many opportunities for developing observation skills and basic natural science experiences.

Aim:

For children to be safe around any animals

To teach the children about animal hygiene and ways to reduce the risk of catching any diseases from animals.

For children to enjoy having a pet and learn how to care for animals.

Rationale:

Children love pets and pets love children. There are many benefits to having a pet as a part of the learning environment. Pets are good companions for children and can be especially helpful with shy children.

Children can touch and talk to pets. They can share love and affection. Pets also give children a chance to learn how to treat and take care of others. However, when bringing a pet into a child environment, guidelines must be followed to protect the health and safety of the children and staff.

Strategies/Practices/Procedures:

- √ Teachers will discuss with the children the correct way to behave around the animals, quiet voices, slow movements, gentle hands etc.
- √ Children will be supervised at all times by staff members, during interactions with animals; no kissing animals will be permitted.
- √ Both children and staff must wash their hands thoroughly with warm soapy water after handling animals.
- √ Food for humans shall be protected from animals at all times.
- √ Any animal faeces shall be picked up using rubber gloves and disposed of in plastic bag, and placed in the wheelie bin immediately.

Staff should always be present when the children are playing with or taking care of a pet. It's important to take the time to teach children how to interact appropriately with a pet. This preventive step is necessary to reduce the risks associated with having pets in the child care setting.

Children need to learn:

- how to approach the pet,
- how to act around the pet,
- how to play with the pet,
- how to feed the pet,
- how to stay away from a pet's mouth, beak, or claws,
- when to leave a pet alone, and
- how to share a pet.

Care of Animals

1. Provide appropriate food and water.
2. Animal containers and cages are cleaned and disinfected weekly or as often as needed (immediate cleaning and disinfecting if animal odours are evident).
3. Cages, litter boxes, and containers will be cleaned and disinfected in an area which is not designated for children.
4. All litter boxes will be inaccessible to children (not in kitchens, food prep areas or staffrooms, corridors, entries, classrooms, where they play or eat, etc.)
5. Animals are not allowed to use the children's play areas inside or outside as a restroom.
6. All containers or cages will prevent debris from spilling out of the container or cage.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedure

Staff will place the animal in a temporary cage or container. The area around the pets will be kept clean at all times and disinfected at least once a day and more often if necessary.

- Wash hands and wear gloves.
- All debris and waste will be discarded in a plastic bag, tied and placed in the garbage.
- Container /cage etc. will be cleaned and disinfected using soap and water, rinse, and disinfectant.
- Cage/container will be allowed to air dry before returning the pet, the cage, or container unless an alternative method is approved.
- Clean and disinfect the sink, faucet, and counter.
- Remove gloves and wash hands.
- Return pet to container or cage.
- Wash hands.

Animal Restrictions

1. Animals will be inaccessible to children with pet allergies. Before a child enters an area where animals have been, it must be cleaned and disinfected.
2. No aggressive or harmful animals will be allowed on the premises.
3. No animals are allowed:
 - Where any child eats, sleeps or active plays areas, entrances, hallways
 - Food preparation areas
 - Children's bathrooms
 - Children's hand washing sinks etc.
4. Animals not allowed in toddler or infant rooms spaces (Fish in properly installed and maintained aquariums may be considered)
5. Reptiles and amphibians are not allowed around children 5 years or younger. Nor can they handle the animals or containers. Due to high risk of disease transmission these animals should not be on site.
6. All cages/containers will be secured and must not be a falling hazard.
7. Any equipment needed for the animal will be inaccessible to the children and safe.

8. Animals must be located only where the environment can be cleaned and sanitised (example: no carpeted areas).
9. Local health jurisdiction requirements for the number of animals on the premises must be met.

Measuring Tools:

Workplace Health and Safety Checklist

Sources and Further Reading:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1783.pdf>

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/>

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

National Quality Standard

Guide to the Law

Links to Other Policies:

Hygiene Cleaning and Infection Control Policy

Workplace Health and Safety Policy